

Among the Alps

A Singular Story of the Writing of a Picture Play

By F. A. MITCHEL

I am considered a literary woman, though I am really nothing more than a literary hack. Real literary persons usually go hungry. I have from the first made a fair living and, considering that I am a woman, a very good thing. The reason for this is that I do my part in supplying that perennial power of reading matter that is quaffed by the masses, whose literary taste is negligible. The readers of classic literature compared with consumers of everyday literary fodder are as one to a million. That is the reason why I, a person devoid of genius, am enabled to make a living.

My natural instincts are all for art, but unfortunately art requires education, and when I was thrown on my own resources for a living I had not the means to obtain an education. There are no schools of literature. Any one who possesses pen, ink and paper may scribble, and the pecuniary return of scribbling is not an index of the nature of the production. So I took up my pen and went to work. What I wrote seemed to interest Tom, Dick and Harry, and since Tom, Dick and Harry were in the market for something to read I began at once to make a living.

While these preliminary remarks are perhaps essential to my story, there is in them but one statement that the story is intended to bring out. I have said that my natural leanings are toward art. I know a thing of beauty instinctively, and I can conceive a thing of beauty. But never having been educated to produce anything beautiful, I am unable to do so. One more element in which what I am going to tell is essential. I also have dramatic instinct.

Now for the story: One winter, desiring to take a vacation during the following summer, I worked very hard in order to produce the funds for a trip abroad. The result was that my nerves broke down under the strain. I took my vacation, but instead of traveling for enjoyment, I traveled for my health. Furthermore, instead of improving I grew worse. Feeling that I needed quiet, I went to Interlaken, in Switzerland, hired a room with windows opening on several of the most magnificent views I have ever beheld and settled down to recuperate.

I had met during the ocean voyage a young woman—Ellen Trowbridge—who was trying to make an artist of herself. She was on her way to Switzerland for the hot season, after which she was going down into Italy to commence her studies. Being two lonely American women, we agreed to travel in company and took a room in the same house at Interlaken.

A few days after our arrival there I collapsed. Something seemed to give away somewhere within me, and I lost consciousness. From that time for two months I remained in an abnormal condition. A part of the time I was in bed and a part sitting up in an easy chair by a window looking out on one of the many views spread before me. From my bed I looked out upon that beautiful mountain, the Jungfrau, as it is seen from Interlaken rising out of a valley made by two nearer mountains. For months before my departure from home I had been creating stories, and they were tumbling about in my brain in confusion. After a time they shaped themselves in dreams. While lying in my bed persons were enacting parts, it seemed, on their own account, for I had no power—at least I was conscious of none—to compel them to do my bidding.

And here let me say that in fiction or plays, which are a form of fiction, a great mistake is made in supposing that the author controls his characters. It is the characters that control the author. He can force them to do his bidding, but he will spoil his story. There are grooves for the emotions as well as other things, and let him drag a character out of its groove, and it will balk at once. Then the author must get him back where he belongs or he will stand out from the naturalness of the play like a sore thumb.

During this abnormal period of mine I was conscious of Ellen Trowbridge being in the room, sometimes ministering to my wants, sometimes sitting at a table writing, sometimes at her easel sketching. These were only glimpses of her, which would come and go as figures in a dream. They were real enough at times for me to have a dim consciousness of the fact that I was fortunate in having an American companion to take an interest in me.

In the early part of my illness I was trying to disentangle the many stories I had written during a long period and keep all sorts of persons from chasing one another through my brain. Later several of my stories that had been favorites with me seemed to drive out the rest, and I found myself linking them together. It was hard work, but better than having so many tumbling about my brain. Looking out on the Jungfrau, specks appeared on its side. Then these specks, as if drawn nearer by a telescope, be-

came dim figures of certain characters prominent in these favorite stories. Gradually they became more distinct, and I was surprised to see that they were disposed to act like reasonable beings. And, more remarkable still, they began to work out a brand new story, composed of the several different stories that had become predominant in my brain.

This unity came from their presenting themselves to me and holding my attention till the end, then beginning at the commencement and going past again. And I noticed that every time they passed they were in a more reasonable shape than the time before. Then when they had ranged themselves and acted like human beings; when there were no more incoherencies to be got rid of, they faded away, and I saw no more of them, at least not together. Now and again one of them would bob up before me—but for no purpose that I could discover—and after looking at me inquiringly, as much as to say, "Do you want anything of me?" would disappear like the turning off of a light.

One day there came a change. I was conscious of everything about me. A clammy perspiration indicated that I was very weak. I did not see Ellen Trowbridge, but a young woman in Swiss costume was sitting near my bed making lace. I called to her, and rising quickly she came to me. I asked her what had been the matter with me.

Instead of replying she ran away and called the woman of whom I rented my room. As soon as she came I asked for my American traveling companion. I was informed that she had left Interlaken a week before. I asked where she had gone and was told that she had directed her letters forwarded to America. Had she left any word for me? None except that she had been suddenly called home.

I passed a period of convalescence in sight of the beautiful Jungfrau. I remembered perfectly the characters of the stories I had concocted during my illness, moving about on the mountain side, but the combination story they had enacted I could not call up. However, I made no effort at anything, either mental or physical. I simply lay waiting for strength. This came at last and since the hot season was over I went down to Spezia in Italy, where I limbed more strength from the sea air. From there I made a brief visit to Florence and Rome and sailed from Naples to America. By the time I reached port I was perfectly restored to health.

Soon after my return I became enamored of picture plays. These plays—I refer to those of dramatic and artistic merit—called out all of appreciation for the drama and art there was in me. One day I saw an announcement of a picture play, the scene of which was laid among the Alps. I went to see it. What was my astonishment to see the same views I had looked upon from my windows at Interlaken. Then came a view of the Jungfrau just as it had appeared to me while ill. There were the dots on its side, and when a nearer view was given they became resolved into human beings.

Here and there was unfolded the play I had dreamed. The characters did not look like those in my dreams, but they did the things I had dreamed. The play was as it appeared to me just before it passed out of my mind—that is, in a finished condition.

To say that I was wonder stricken is to express feebly what I felt. I was frightened. Was I in my senses? Was not my illness returning to me? I was stopped by curiosity. I must see the play to the end.

When the end came I was near collapse. That night I did not sleep a wink. How had a play which had evolved itself in my brain been transferred through films to a screen in America? No solution occurred to me that had any element of probability in it. I went to see my physician and told him what had occurred. He looked at me scrutinizingly and, despite his efforts at concealment, anxiously. After some thought he gave me his theory as to the cause of what I had told him. He said that there was nothing unusual in the character of my previously written stories chasing one another through my brain. A drug would do that. But when he came to account for the formation of a picture in my brain he was staggered. As to the transference of this play to a screen in America, he could only account for it on the ground that when I went to the theater I had a temporary relapse of my illness and saw what was not on the screen. He forbade me to do any literary work and to live as quietly as possible.

The true solution came in time. One day I was surprised by a call from Ellen Trowbridge. She came to make a confession. She told me that while I was lying ill at Interlaken I was much of the time delirious. While delirious I was constructing a picture play, going over and over it time and again. Presently it occurred to her to make note of what I was saying, and she then secured an outline for the play. Then it occurred to her to paint the scenes for the play, some of which were before her; others she selected.

She had been deeply impressed with the play and yielded to a temptation to do a dishonorable act. Being suddenly called home, she took her notes and pictures with her and sold them to a film company. The result was the play that I had seen on the screen. She handed me \$500, which she had received for her stolen property.

The scientific moral of this story is that my dramatic and artistic proclivities came out while I was in delirium. But how I was enabled to construct a play under such abnormal physical conditions is a problem for more analytical minds than mine to solve.

ARREST OF ST. PAUL.

Acts 21:27-40—Sept. 19.

Returning From the Apostle's Third Missionary Tour—The Missionaries Cordially Received by the Church at Jerusalem—Concession to Prejudice Unsuccessful—St. Paul in Danger From Mob Violence—The Roman Garrison From Fortress Antonia Called Out—Christ's Ambassador Made Prisoner—Suffering For Christ.

"Thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."—Acts 22:15.

WHEN St. Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem, he was returning from his third missionary tour amongst the Gentiles. On his way to Jerusalem the Lord had permitted forewarnings to reach him, informing him that he might expect trouble—bonds and imprisonment—in the Holy City. Undeterred, however, this noble ambassador for Christ arrived there, bringing with him money collections from the Churches of Asia Minor and Greece for the Church at Jerusalem, which apparently was in a measure of financial distress.

Their reception on their arrival was of a private character, and they had further manifestations of the same loving brotherhood noted in our study for August 27. On the following day, which probably was Pentecost (Acts 20:16), the Church was called together to receive the Apostle and his companions in a more formal manner. St. James the Less was apparently the recognized leader in the Jerusalem Church. St. Paul recounted his experiences during his third missionary tour and the Lord's blessing upon his ministrations of the Truth, notwithstanding the tribulations permitted. Probably he turned over the collections from the Gentile brethren at the same time.

The brief record indicates that the brethren at Jerusalem were considerably perturbed by St. Paul's presence. Not merely did they fear for his personal safety, but they were alarmed lest his coming might stir up persecution against him all; for the Apostle's activity made him well known to the Jews in the influential part of the world in which he had labored. St. James and his associates realized that in all probability there might be present at the Pentecostal feast Jews from those quarters. They knew that St. Paul's activities had already been reported; and that some, even of the Hebrew Christians, were troubled at his reported teachings that the Law was dead and that no one was obligated to pay any further attention to it.

Therefore the brethren urged St. Paul to contradict these partial misconceptions by entering the Temple and associating with some brethren who had taken the Nazarite Vow. (Numbers 6:1-21.) They did not suggest that he take this vow, but that he be present with these brethren, in recognition of what they did; and that he bear their expenses, which included the shaving of their heads, the burning of the hair, and the cost of sacrificing for them four animals each.

St. Paul's Conduct Misunderstood. While St. James and the leaders of the Church evidently understood St. Paul's position, yet apparently they did not grasp so clearly as did he the fact that "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile was completely broken down, and that the Law was merely a pedagogue, designed to lead to the School of Christ. St. Paul taught that the Law could save neither Jew nor Gentile; that only faith in Christ could bring the soul into relationship to God; and that while certain blessings still remained for the Jews, yet during this Gospel Age God is selecting a Spiritual Seed of Abraham from both Jews and Gentiles; and that any attempt to keep the Law with a view to meriting eternal life would surely fail.—Romans 3:20-31; Ephesians 3:1-7; Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.

Nothing in this, however, really interfered with St. Paul's doing just what the Elders at Jerusalem urged him to do for the men under the Nazarite Vow. Nevertheless, in our judgment a more courageous course might have been pursued. Apparently the very method taken to ward off public opposition merely aroused it. When the seven days were nearly expired, the Apostle was recognized by Jews from Asia. Having seen him with Trophimus, a Greek from Ephesus, they jumped to the conclusion that the latter was one of the four men whose head was shaved. From the Jewish standpoint this would have been a grievous offense; for only Jews were permitted to come within the Temple precincts.

At the cry that the Temple was being profaned, a mob speedily gathered and dragged the Apostle out of the edifice. While they were beating him, seeking to kill him, the chief captain of the Roman garrison of the Castle of Antonia, close by the Temple, hurried to the scene with a company of soldiers. The Apostle was taken to the castle. But the mob made a mad rush to get him from the soldiers or to kill him outright.



St. Paul in the Temple.

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Notice of Proposed Closing of Streets and Alleys.

To all whom it may concern: Take notice that pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Commission of the City of Owosso, Michigan, on the 25th day of August, A. D. 1916, the Commission of said city will meet upon Monday, the 18th day of September, 1916, at 7:30 o'clock in the afternoon of said day for the purpose of hearing objections to the closing of certain streets and alleys as set forth in resolution No. 953 shown below. Objections may be filed in my office in writing by any person interested up until the day and hour mentioned. The annexed resolution was passed by the Commission of said city at its regular meeting on the 25th day of August, A. D. 1916, and in pursuance of this resolution this notice is hereby given.

Resolved by the Commission of the City of Owosso that it is hereby deemed advisable to vacate, discontinue and abolish the following described streets and alleys in M. Keyte's Maple Heights Addition and in the Maple Ridge Park Addition to the City of Owosso, Michigan:

(1) A portion of the ten (10) foot alley described as follows: Commencing at the southwest corner of Section 19, T. 7 N., R. 3 E., thence east on section line 38 feet; thence north ten feet to the southeast corner of lot 4 of block 5 of said M. Keyte's Maple Heights Addition; thence north 120 feet to the northeast corner of said lot 1; thence west 38 feet to the north and south section line; thence south ten feet to place of beginning.

(2) A portion of the 15 foot alley described as follows: Commencing at a point on the west line of Section 19, T. 7 N., R. 3 E., 10 feet north of the southwest corner of said section; thence east 15 feet to the southwest corner of lot 1 of block 5 of said M. Keyte's Maple Heights Addition; thence north 120 feet to the northeast corner of said lot 1; thence west 15 feet to the north and south section line; thence south 12 feet to place of beginning.

(3) A portion of Keyte Avenue described as follows: Commencing at a point on the west line of Section 19, T. 7 N., R. 3 E., 130 feet north of the southwest corner of said section; thence east 308 feet to the northeast corner of lot 4 of block 5 of said M. Keyte's Maple Heights Addition; thence north 50 feet to the southeast corner of lot 14 of block 1 of said addition; thence west 308 feet to the section line; thence south along the section line to the place of beginning.

(4) A portion of Division or South Hickory street described as follows: Commencing at a point 19 feet north and 21 feet east of the southwest corner of said section 19; thence north to the northwest corner of lot 7 of block 8 of the Maple Ridge Park Addition; thence west 33 feet to the section line; thence south on the section line to a point 100 feet north of the southwest corner of said section 19; thence east 33 feet to the place of beginning.

(5) A portion of Collingwood Avenue described as follows: Commencing at the northwest corner of lot 1 of block 1 of M. Keyte's Maple Heights Addition; thence east 25 feet to Grand Avenue; thence north 60 feet; thence west 25 feet; thence south 60 feet to the place of beginning.

Be it further resolved that the commission will meet at the office of the City Clerk in said city upon Monday, the 18th day of September, A. D. 1916, at 7:30 o'clock in the afternoon of said date for the purpose of hearing objections, and the said commission will upon said date and in said place hear all objections to the vacating, discontinuing and abolishing of said streets and alleys.

Be it further resolved that the City Clerk is hereby directed to give notice according to the terms of the charter of the City of Owosso of the action of the Commission, and include in said notice a copy of this resolution, and that the Commission will meet at the time therein set forth and at least two weeks after the passage of this resolution, at which time and place opportunity will be given to all persons interested to be heard regarding said discontinuing, vacating and abolishing of said streets and alleys.

Dated August 30th, 1916.
ARTHUR H. DUMOND,
Clerk of the City of Owosso.

Notice of Meeting to Determine Necessity.

To Whom It May Concern: Whereas, on the 8th day of August, A. D. 1916, an application was filed with me, the undersigned County Drain Commissioner of the County of Shiawassee, for the deepening, widening and straightening of a certain drain, which said drain was described in the said application as follows to-wit: Deepening, widening, straightening the Smith Drain the entire length of said drain, the bottom of said drain to be four feet or less; which said drain will traverse the following township in said county: Rush.

Therefore, notice is hereby given that in accordance with the statute in such case made and provided, a meeting will be held on the 19th day of September, A. D. 1916, at the residence of Wm. J. Rourke, in the Township of Rush, at nine o'clock in the forenoon of said day for the purpose of hearing evidence by me, the said County Drain Commissioner, as to whether or not the said proposed drain is necessary and conducive to the public health, convenience and welfare. At said meeting any and all persons owning lands liable to assessment for benefits, or whose lands shall be crossed by said drain, may appear for or against said proceedings, and may be heard in relation thereto.

ALONZO GRIFFIN,
County Drain Commissioner of the County of Shiawassee.
Dated at Corunna, this 29th day of August, A. D. 1916.

Notice of Meeting to Determine Necessity.

To Whom It May Concern: Whereas, on the 15th day of August, A. D. 1916, an application was filed with me, the undersigned County Drain Commissioner of the County of Shiawassee, for the locating and establishing of a certain drain, which said drain was described in said application as follows, to-wit:

Beginning at a point about 10 rods south and 25 rods west of the n.e. corner of Sec. 26, T. 9 N., R. 2 E., thence southwesterly about 110 rods to line between R. Rourke and Chas. Freeman, being about 70 rods w. of sec. line, thence southwesterly to line between Chas. Freeman and Wm. Rourke at a point about 100 rods w. of line of Sec. 26, thence southwesterly to the highway at a point about 60 rods e. of M. R. R., thence across highway, thence west along a side of highway to a point about 10 rods w. of M. C. R. H.

Bottom width to be 4 feet or less. Which said drain will traverse the following township in said county: Rush.

Therefore, notice is hereby given that in accordance with the statute in such case made and provided, a meeting will be held on the 11th day of September, A. D. 1916, at the residence of Wm. J. Rourke, in the Township of Rush, at 9:30 o'clock in the forenoon of said day for the purpose of hearing evidence by me, the said County Drain Commissioner, as to whether or not the said proposed drain is necessary and conducive to the public health, convenience and welfare. At said meeting any and all persons owning lands liable to assessment for benefits, or whose lands shall be crossed by said drain, may appear for or against said proceedings, and may be heard in relation thereto.

ALONZO GRIFFIN,
County Drain Commissioner of the County of Shiawassee.
Dated at Corunna, Michigan, this 29th day of August, A. D. 1916.

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